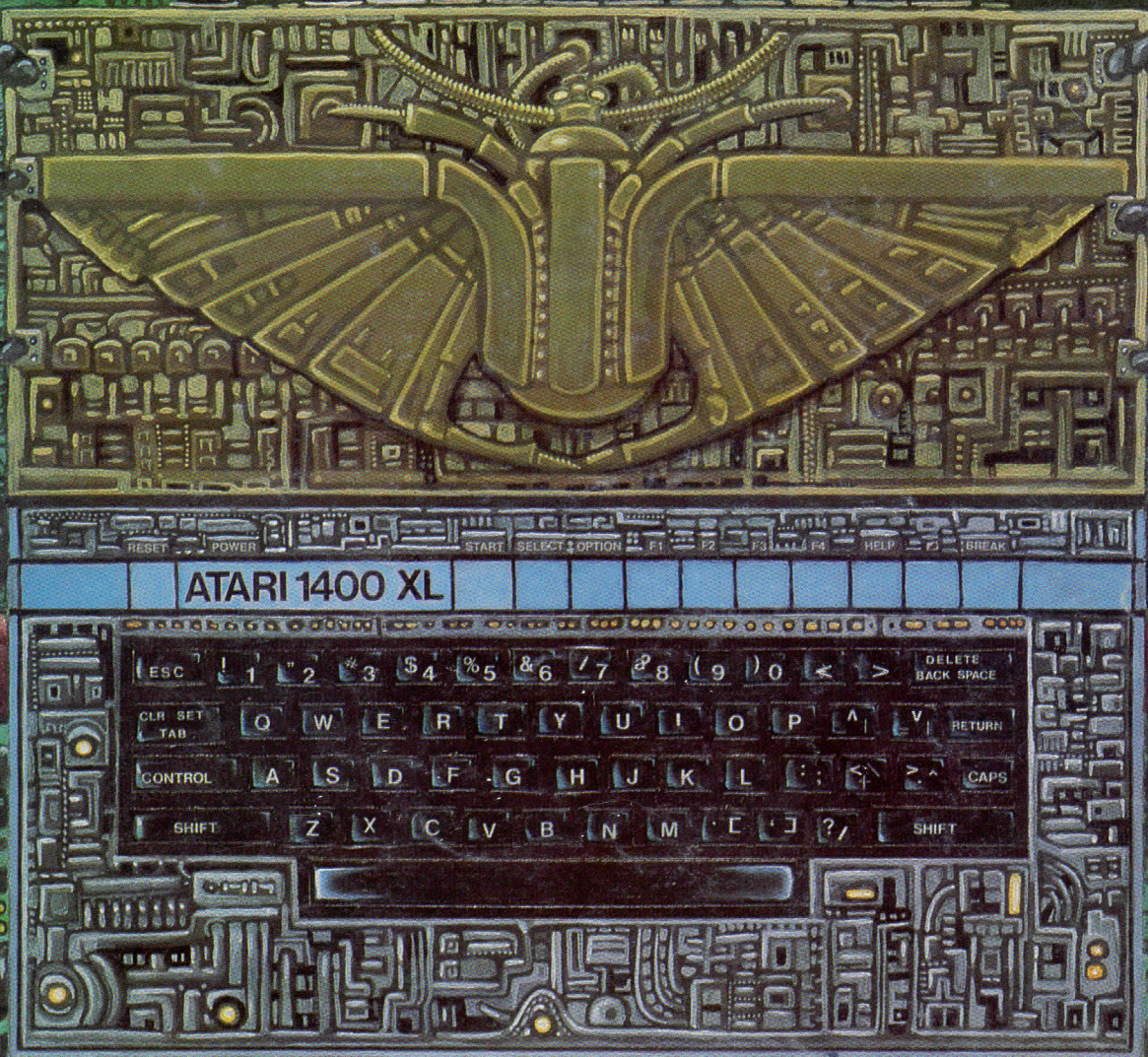


ANALOG COMPUTING™

THE MAGAZINE FOR ATARI COMPUTER OWNERS

*George Grieninger**Res. 846-5499*

**ROUNDUP
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ANALOG COMPUTING™

ISSUE NO. 13 SEPT./OCT.

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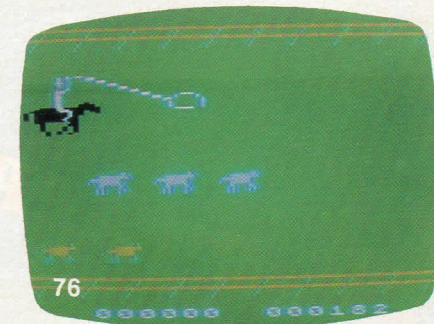
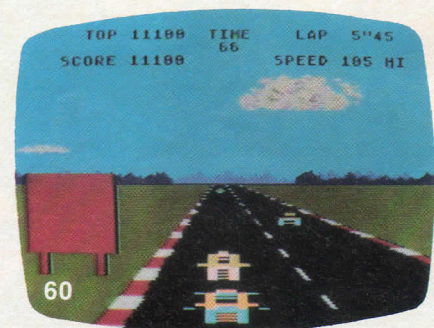
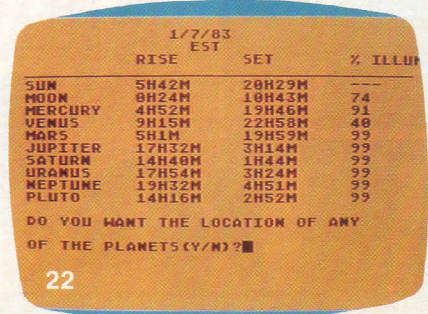
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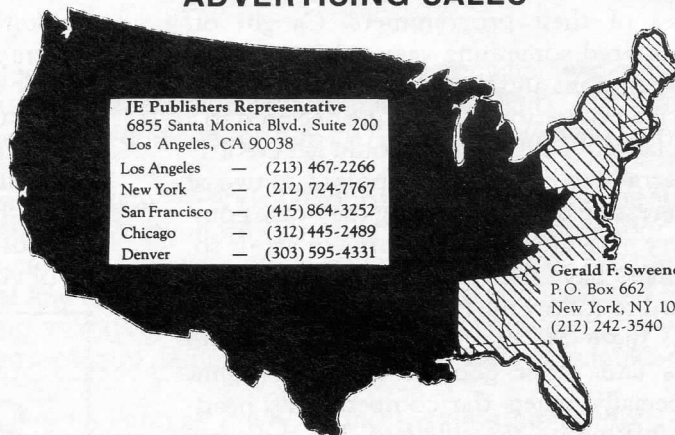
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ABOUT THE COVER

This issue, we decided to give our camera a break. Instead of force-feeding it vast amounts of light, we turned our cover over to the talents of Michael D. Law, a "mobile" artist who was kind enough to make a stopover in Massachusetts for us. Michael has done quite a bit of work in the field of science fiction and fantasy, although he has done work in other fields and is comfortable with a variety of styles. The cover for this issue was inspired by the work of Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger, whose nightmarish designs have appeared in numerous books and magazines, and were showcased in Ridley Scott's film "ALIEN." The ATARI logo may never appear in a more imaginative setting — but then again, keep watching our covers.

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THE DARK CRYSTAL

by Roberta Williams

ATARI Version by Chris Iden

SIERRA ON-LINE, INC.

36575 Mudge Range Road

Coarsegold, California 93614

48K Disk \$39.95

by Brian Moriarty

Dark Crystal is an illustrated adventure based on the Jim Henson movie of the same name. The object is to locate and restore the missing shard of a magic crystal before the "Great Conjunction" of three suns. I haven't seen the film, so I had no prior knowledge of the story's plot or characters. My comments here are based solely on the inherent qualities of the game and not on its value as a souvenir.



The Dark Crystal

The program occupies both sides of three disks. Disk 1, Side A is the main interpreter; the other sides contain picture data for the dozens of color illustrations. On-Line thoughtfully provides a back-up utility that lets you copy the picture disks, which are subject to lots of wear and tear. The interpreter is copy-protected, however.

Game play is similar to On-Line's popular **Wizard and the Princess** and **Mission: Asteroid** adventures. The parser is of the simple two-word, verb-noun variety; multiple commands or complex sentences are not allowed. Each game location has its own hi-res color illustration which must be pulled off the disk. You can "flip away" the picture temporarily to view a listing of your last several commands. Provisions are made for the saving and loading of up to 15 different game positions. The program also lets you format an extra game-save disk during the course of play — a lifesaver if you're in a tough spot with no formatted disks handy.

The illustrations for **Dark Crystal** are supposed to have been digitized from actual movie stills. Detail and coloration are still rather crude — certainly not photographic — but the selection includes a number of dramatic perspective and shading effects you don't often see in games of this type.

I spent the better part of an evening mapping out **Dark Crystal**. I wandered through almost forty different locations and exhausted three of the five picture-disk sides. Aside from a few unavoidable encounters with characters telling you what to look for, *nothing happened*. There were no threatening situations, no puzzles, mazes or unusual objects to pick up, just cute little creatures peeking out from behind trees, and a couple of dead ends. The handsomely printed owner's guide tells you most of what you need to know about your mission; very little is left to the imagination.

Dark Crystal seems to be more concerned with recreating the events and scenery of the movie than with providing a fun game. Despite its fine packaging and professional engineering, I still prefer On-Line's previous Hi-Res Adventures for the ATARI. □

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